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AUTHOR	Marcinkiewicz, Henryk R.
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ABSTRACT

The field of instructional technology is rich with models and systems for planning or designing that are particularly useful for planning a program for faculty development because the intent of such a program is to be instructional. A process for implementing a faculty development program is described in this paper. The goals are integrating instruction with technology and professional development. The model is based on systems planning and draws together learning factors and implementation strategies. Outcomes include understanding the feasibility and critical concerns of this initiative. The discussion is organized into five parts: (1) Developing a Vision; (2) Looking at Successful Practice; (3) Implementing the Vision; (4) Realities; and (5) The Future. Pertinent considerations are discussed and relevant models are referenced to help guide the planning for a faculty development program. (AEF)

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Systems Planning for Faculty Development: Integrating Instruction with Technology

Henryk R. Marcinkiewicz
Pennsylvania College of Technology

A process for implementing a faculty development program is described. The goals are integrating instruction with technology and professional development. The model is based on systems planning and draws together learning factors and implementation strategies. Outcomes include understanding the feasibility and critical concerns of this initiative.

The key word in this discussion is "planning." The field of instructional technology is rich with models and systems for planning or designing that are particularly useful for planning a program for faculty development because the intent of such a program is to be instructional. The organization of this discussion includes five parts: 1) Developing a Vision; 2) Looking at Successful Practice; 3) Implementing the Vision; 4) Realities; and 5) The Future. Pertinent considerations are discussed and relevant models are referenced to help guide the planning for a faculty development program.

Part 1: Developing a Vision

Imagine your vision of the institution in a few years. See yourself being there. See how faculty development is done. Have a vision. Appreciate the substantive nature of the change in the organization from the current. See real changes that result from effort (Marcinkiewicz, 2001).

Because the implementation of a successful faculty development program requires a change in the organization of an institution, it can be daunting. Knowing that you can accomplish this is the most gratifying part. And, it is a good idea. Perform a short test on yourself, "What would be the consequences if you did not proceed?" See if you would be satisfied with the consequences.

Goals

There are two goals of this discussion, your appreciation for and understanding of processes that will lead to the institutionalization of faculty development, and the integration of technology with instruction.

Short History of Faculty Development

Faculty Development programs in higher education are a recent phenomenon. One of the earliest was formed about twenty years ago at the University of Michigan. But there is a reason that development offices have not been commonplace; simply, the absence of development is a reflection of the expectations of higher education on the professorate. Most often professors have been hired because of their expertise in a subject area or because of their researcher. The contradiction is obvious, professors were expected to know something, teaching was either simple enough for an intelligent person to figure out or it was less important than subject expertise or research.

A change in thinking in higher education about teaching, the roles of professors, their preparation for teaching, and their continuing learning about teaching is reflected in the establishment of faculty development programs. One of the motivations for faculty development may very well have been the changed role of students. Students are expressing their expectations of professors one of which is for the professor to be an effective teacher.

There are a variety of names for faculty development programs. They are usually organized as centers and their titles often include one or more (sometimes all) of these terms: faculty, development, teaching, learning, and excellence. In summary, we have come to expect teaching from teachers and we are providing the means for faculty members to learn about teaching until they are done learning, which is to say that they will learn continuously.

Part 2: Looking at Successful Practice

The first planning tool discussed is a gap analysis that identified the areas to be addressed at my former institution, Ferris State University in Michigan. The program there was the Center for Teaching, Learning, & Faculty Development (CTL&FD). The discussion of the CTL & FD is organized by the structures of a gap analysis: the optimal state, the current state, followed by the response and the outcomes.

Optimal State—Wanted...

The optimal state included several areas. First, there was a desire for widespread interaction among faculty on a decentralized campus. Second, there was a felt need for increased communication. Third, there was a desire for reflection about teaching. Fourth, there was a need for training for faculty. And, finally there was a need for professional development.

In general, we wanted to communicate and to learn. The gaps reflected the view taken by Peter Senge in the "Fifth Discipline," that the goal of communication is learning. We wanted to learn and our communication channels were not functioning well.

Current State—Had...

The current state comprised several areas throughout the university.

The faculty were frustrated with the absence of a means for them to improve or even to establish skills in teaching. Many faculty members were directly hired from business and industry and so unlike their colleagues who were hired from other academic institutions, they were not even familiar with the setting. Both sets of colleagues did share a lack of preparation for teaching.

There was a sense of fragmentation at the university that was evidenced by activities that were occurring at one college that had relevance for the entire institution but were not known by members outside of the college.

There had been proposal for a faculty development program which was a reflection of pent-up demand for learning. These are the artifacts of a functioning system that was not acting cohesively.

Response—Did...Structure...

The Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs approved the establishment of the CTL & FD. These are some of the structural elements that were introduced.

Varied schedules of activities

Commonly available times ("holy hours"). Thursdays from 11 AM to 1 PM had been a part of the existing schedule reserved for university-wide activities such as faculty development. The CTL & FD encouraged adherence to the schedule.

Training sessions were scheduled for short and long periods. Some sessions lasted three to five days. We favored very short sessions lasting fifty minutes that focused on a single concept and which were repeated several times. The aim in scheduling was to offer as many opportunities for attendance as possible, in other words, to be accommodating to the widely varying schedules of faculty members.

Special interest groups

We actively made the acquaintance of faculty members sometimes directly visiting offices to introduce ourselves in an effort to build awareness for the activities of the CTL & FD and to learn about the interests of faculty members. These activities led to the formation of special interest groups that were supported by the CTL & FD with coordination of meeting times and places and the provision of refreshments. Some groups that formed included interests such as public speaking, web development, grant writing, and scholarly writing.

Individual consultations

The interactions between the CTL & FD staff and the faculty were not only in workshops or group meetings, we also scheduled individual consultations with professors as well as meetings with entire departments.

Faculty as facilitators

There was variety among our presenters as well. The richest pool was from the faculty itself. In fact, faculty appreciated very much the opportunity to learn from each other.

Response—Did...Philosophy

We listened carefully and often to faculty members and our practices were true to learner-centered philosophy in an iteration referred to as "Progressive Education." We ensure that the teaching is tailored to the needs of the learner and we provide opportunities for the faculty-learner to practice during the instruction. The philosophy of our practice is faculty-as-learner-centered development.

The CTL & FD enjoyed an independent status and was not affiliated with any of the colleges, but rather reported directly to the office of the vice-president for academic affairs. As with any effective instruction, we tried to follow up on any activities that we offered. For example, if a person participated in a workshop on syllabus preparation, he or she was asked to be available to advise colleagues. Or, sometimes we would simply send an e-mail message asking whether the workshop helped or continued communication with the individual.

Response—Did...Incentives...

The well-established rule about incentives is that they must be the appreciated by the receiver in order to be valued and motivating. With faculty members, money was not the primary incentive. We tried a variety of financial incentive plans, and large amounts of money did not seem more desirable than a nominal sum that would be considered a professional honorarium. When asked, faculty members first sought the learning; any tokens of recognition were appreciated if they expressed a value for the faculty as professionals. One requisite that was universally effective was the provision of food. Another incentive for faculty especially at institutions that are decentralized is the opportunity to meet their colleagues which helps to build esprit de corps. Perhaps the primary incentive for faculty to continue learning is their innate love of learning. Faculty members are, after all, educators. A final practical point is that participation in development activities counted towards promotion and tenure and post-tenure review consideration.

Response—Did...Activities...

The CTL & FD organized its activities in three main areas mirroring those conducted by Centers around the country as suggested by the Professional and Organizational Development network.

Professional development

This category of activities focuses on the career of a professor such as mentoring, grant writing, scholarly writing, promotion and tenure.

Instructional development

This category of activities focuses on teaching and learning including instruction, assessment, learner characteristics, and instructional media.

Support of the institution

This category of activities focuses on the professor participating in and understanding the system of the institution, including its mission, history, town and gown relationships, the community, and the personnel makeup of the institution.

Achieved...

The faculty and the CTL & FD together achieved very active participation and growth in programming.

- 70% participation rate
  There were over 450 full-time tenure track faculty members who were organized in a collective bargaining unit for which there was no mandate to participate in faculty development activities. Reporting of statistics like these were facilitated by the database created for recording our activities. It served us well when we reported to three accreditation agencies.
- 11% in 15-week courses
  One example of participation was the over-capacity sign up for 10 and 15 week CTL & FD led courses.

- 97%-ile of worldwide users of WebCT
  The demand for a web presence was explosive and faculty driven. Once a course management system was introduced, faculty members sought training and were productive in delegating some of their instruction to the system.
- Hesburgh certificate of excellence
  The CTL & FD was awarded TIAA-CREF's award for a program aimed at developing undergraduate faculty to improve student learning.
- Distributing our services
  The CTL & FD began to train faculty at area institutions.
- Exemplars for other institutions
  We communicated with several institutions to advise about setting up programs.
- 80–90% faculty satisfaction rating
  The CTL & FD enjoyed high approval ratings on university-wide surveys.
- Goal of continuing learning
  The strong support by the faculty was an indicator of progress toward the goal of continuing learning.
- Yearlong transition program for new faculty
  An accomplishment was the initiation of a highly successful program for new faculty.
- No indifference
  It was very gratifying that the mood on campus lacked indifference. There was strong and expressed interest among the faculty.

Part 3: Implementing the Vision

The discussion about establishing a program at your institution is organized by the structures of a gap analysis similar to Part 2, the optimal and current states, but implementation steps are described at length. The conditions are all assumed but considered to be very likely.

Optimal State—Wants...

Because of the universal interest in these two areas among institutions of higher education, it can be assumed that your institution would also be want to operate a faculty program for professional development and instructional development.

Current State—Has...

The appraisal of the actual state at your institution reveals that the following conditions exist. There is motivation, limited funding, and an estimated retirement of 50% of your faculty within the next 10 years. These are fairly safe assumptions and reflect the reality of most institutions of higher education.

Implementation—Can Do...

Use instructional system design strategy to organize your planning especially because your focus will include instruction. There are a variety of models available and in general it is probably less important which model you use than that you do use a model to keep track of your thinking. These well known planning activities organize this discussion about implementation: assess, design, develop, implement, and evaluate. Bear in mind that while, they are presented in sequential order, untoward conditions may affect the order in which you may actually be able to conduct planning. Try, however, to establish your evaluation methods and techniques to be congruent with the objectives you establish.

It is assumed that you would have conducted a process to determine your needs and that was described in the previous section detailing the results of a gap analysis. The next processes in which you would engage are design and evaluation.

Design Steps...Objectives

The following is an example of suitable objectives for a faculty development program.

- Learn about your field
- Learn about teaching & learning
- Serve the institution
- Reflect upon teaching
- Understand students
- Engage in scholarship

The following is an example of suitable objectives for a development program that also serves staff and administration. Recall that traditionally higher education administrators come from faculty ranks and do not have formal training in management or leadership.

- Learn about the field
- Learn communication technology
- Serve the institution

It is important to focus on the ultimate objective of any faculty development program, that is, the development of students. Example objectives for students include...

- Improved learning
- Retention

It is also important possible and desirable to identify objectives for the institution. Example objectives include...

- Competitiveness
- Retention of faculty & students
- High Esteem
- Esprit de Corps

Design Steps...Evaluation

Some purposes of evaluation are to gauge whether your program is meeting its objectives and what factors or conditions are contributing to its operation. To facilitate your assessment and evaluation processes, it is recommended that you establish a database that includes your activities as well as the various units of your institution and the members of the faculty. Gather data counts of participants but also count repeat participants. For example, there may be two activities with 10 participants, but they may be the same 10 individuals. It is desirable to know whether the participants are the same or not. Consider various quantitative and qualitative measures.

As part of your evaluation process, count your failed activities as well as your successful ones. Make plans for what you will do as your activities succeed or fail to meet your objectives.

A valuable practice to introduce for your faculty is the Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) procedure (Clark & Redmond, 1982). This simple procedure is conducted early in the semester in the absence of the professor. It is a kind of focus group activity intended to get early and candid feedback from the students. It can be effective and is inexpensive. We assess using the SGID format after each of our activities, then annually we do a more detailed survey. Assessment is a burden and intrusion and so we limit our use of them. Try to use varied other formats to gather information. Use phone calls or face-to-face conversations to get input from faculty. Note how often and for what reason a faculty calls the senior administration; it must be pretty urgent for a call to be made to senior administration

Design Steps...Planning Considerations

As part of the design process it is recommended to consider four factors affecting learning. These were suggested by Jenkins (1979) and Bransford (1979): media, assessment, the learners' characteristics, and instruction.

Media

These are pertinent questions to consider.

- What media will you use?

- Who or what will deliver instruction?
- What media are available to you?
- What do you currently use?
- What can you not use?
- What is your institution's plan for providing equipment to faculty, for classrooms, for web-enhanced instruction, for complete online instruction?

Learners' Characteristics

You need to consider you're the faculty and staff administrators and their needs as a group, as subgroups, and as individuals. Some guiding questions are…

What are their particular needs?

- Who are faculty?
- How are people in the academy unique?
- Are there characteristics particular to members of the institution?
- Are they similar to academics in CA (diverse) or NV (from many areas and newly arrived)?
- Who are managers and administrators?
- To what kind of information do they respond?
- Emphasize practical over theoretical pedagogy.
- People outside of a field tend to lack the interest and the preparation to participate in a theoretical discussion at length.
- Low ceilings in faculty career
- Build steps into the career path. Consider starting a senior learning community. See the work of Milton Cox at Miami University, Ohio.
- Administrators often untrained in mgmt.

Characteristics of Faculty Members and Other Academics

- Highly intelligent
- Love of learning
- Strong sense of collegiality

Ask…

- How would you characterize academics as compared to airline personnel, or the military?
- What are their career expectations?
- Why would they want to learn more?

Instruction

Methods of instruction need to be considered. After all, the learners must do something in order to learn. What will they do? How will you orchestrate the activity so that it is effective? These are guiding questions…

- In what activities will they engage?
- What scheduling tactics? Formats? Instructors?
- What methods?
- How will you pace the activities.

Instruction—Best Practices

Some practices that worked well at the CTL & FD included the following…

- Learning communities. Focus on activities that demand communication and collegiality. Remember the strong sense of collegiality among academics.
- Learner-centered instruction: customize and demonstrate learning(Progressive ed.)
- Collegial activities…panels. Allow the faculty to practice, often. Customize the training to meet their needs.

- Patience & non-threatening practice. Allow faculty, adult learners, time to learn and many opportunities to practice.

Content

The questions that will guide planning for content are…

- What do faculty need to know about?
- What do administrators need to know about?

Faculty

Just as you, the planner of instruction for faculty need to consider four factors of learning, so do your faculty need to learn about, understand and address four factors of learning in the instruction that they plan and implement. Once again, four factors of learning are media, assessment, instruction, learners' characteristics, administration, & advising

Administrators

For administrators focus on three elements of leadership: management, team-building, and creating the future. These are suggested by Sullivan and Harper in their book, "Hope is Not a Method," in which they discuss how the armed forces were reorganized from dealing with predictable conditions to unpredictable conditions.

Part 4: Realities

You may still be wondering, "Is this all possible?" Gilbert (1978) has suggested three areas that must be accounted for if competence is to occur. In this case, these conditions need to be addressed in order for faculty development to occur. The areas are contributed to externally by the institution and internally by the individuals aspiring to competent behavior.

The Model of Competence suggests the external and Internal provisions of the following conditions:

- Motivation & Incentives
- Equipment & Ability
- Information & Understanding…and training

In application, the model can be completed as follows. The institution provides incentives, equipment, and expresses expectations. The individual becomes motivated, adapts for competency, and learns.

- Costs
- There are a variety of costs involved.
- Effort
- Personnel
- Time
- Restating the mission

Not all costs are directly financial.

One cost in restating the mission may be the most motivating: giving value to the learning that professionals do.

Part 5: The Future

Your endeavor may result in the following…

- Unique program
- Change in way of life
- Achieved goals

Several models relevant to planning a faculty development program were discussed in the context of an instructional design model. The discussion followed a sequence from developing a vision to looking at past practice to implementation to reality checks to the future. Some points that deserve restating: a faculty development program requires an institutional change, the implementation requires a vision as well as effort as would be expected of any successful and rewarding effort. To paraphrase a chief of the Oglala Lakota Native Americans, "...vision with work is only a dream; work without a vision is a drudgery, but together they can change the world...."

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